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STATE FOR IIP/G/WHA, INR/R/MR, WHA/BSC, WHA/PDA, INR/IAA

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TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [CI](#) [VE](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - UNITED NATIONS AND CHILEAN VOTE

¶1. On May 30, conservative, independent "La Tercera" (circ. 102,000) carried an editorial entitled, "Chile and its Vote in the (U.N.) Security Council." Quote:

"The decision is complex for the (Chilean) Executive for two reasons; first, because preventing Venezuela from becoming a Council member has become an important White House political goal in Latin America; and second, because Venezuela...holds key strategic elements for Chile, especially with respect to its energy supply.... Choosing either front over the other...could entail significant external and internal costs for Chile. Caracas' gas and oil reserves mean it has much to say about any type of South American energy plan...but it is also true that Chavez...could hardly represent the region in the UNSC. But synchronicity between La Moneda and the White House is also a fact, which--except for the impasse over the 2003 invasion of Iraq--has been reflected in Chile's international stances on security and politics and in the promotion of a successful FTA.... Chile must not lose this political and economic capital, which on another level relates to the legitimacy of its political and economic models."

¶2. On May 28, "La Tercera" column by conservative Libertad y Desarrollo think tank's Cristian Larroulet entitled, "Bachelet vs. Chavez." Quote:

"Populism has returned to Latin America and its star is Hugo Chavez...who financed Argentina's debt in 2005...and handed Cuba 100,000 barrels a day of practically free oil.... Chavez' projection is dangerous not just for those countries directly involved but for the rest of Latin America and Chile... (Chile's) main task is to continue as an example...of austerity and not fall to populism. This will allow President Bachelet to contribute to development in Chile and in Latin America, accentuating the differences with Chavez' populism."

¶3. On May 30 "La Tercera" column by journalist Jose Rodriguez Elizondo entitled, "Bush Against Bachelet." Quote:

"After his defeat in Chile on the 'approve-my-war-against-Iraq' theme George W. Bush strikes again. Now...he is planning to demand solidarity from Michelle Bachelet to thwart Hugo Chavez' efforts to join the UN Security Council.... But things are not the same. Then, Bush was at the peak of his power...while today his approval rating is at its minimum, he has two years left in office, Iraq has become a Vietnam, he has consolidated the world's dislike and the Chavez 'issue' is less dramatic than a misguided war.... From a Chilean point of view, former President Ricardo Lagos' decision on Iraq marked his most glorious international moment... Furthermore, Washington is not at the point of jumping from reiterated praise (of Chile) to spiteful repudiation due to a third party far from the bilateral relationship. In addition, while European leaders would not slit their wrists for Chavez, they would not welcome Chile as a (U.S.) lackey, either.... Our President could promote consensus among her counterparts in the region, beginning with Brazil and Argentina and then Mexico and Colombia. .... This way Bush could

not react angrily against Chile and much less against other nations in the region that are demographically and geopolitically more powerful."

KELLY